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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

State Enhanced 9-1-1 Program
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Wireless 9-1-1 Calls In an Emergency Can You Be Found?

Camp Murray, WA – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved rules that became effective on Nov. 24, 2003 allowing the transfer of your wireline telephone number to your wireless phone. This practice is called local number portability.

Thousands of wireless phone users considering disconnecting their home wireline phone after transferring their number to their wireless phone should know they could be risking their personal safety.

The decision to switch from wireline to wireless is not one to be made lightly or solely for economical reasons. A wireless call to 9-1-1 may not be as reliable as you have come to expect with your wireline phone.

In many areas across the state, a wireless 9-1-1 call cannot automatically display the exact location of the call to the 9-1-1 center. Should the distressed caller be unable to speak or does not know the area well enough to provide street directions or an address, help could be delayed or not arrive at all.

In time, technology may be able to provide the location of wireless 9-1-1 callers. But that technology is still being developed in the wireless industry. The FCC requires the 9-1-1 caller's location to be provided within 150 to 300 meters, equivalent to one to three blocks. Wireline phones presently provide the caller's exact address for residential units in Washington State.

So before disconnecting your wireline phone and going entirely with a wireless phone, understand the limitations of your wireless telephone when calling 9-1-1 for emergency medical, fire or police assistance. Ask your wireless carrier for documentation of the location accuracy they are providing when 9-1-1 is dialed in your area.